
The Best New Bar

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Greatest new trend in specialty-foods retailing (are you reading, Whole Foods?): bulk salt bar.

Ken Liss is full of good ideas. There was his idea to leave his academic - administration job to study cheese at Artisanal here in New York, which proved to be pretty sharp. Then there was his notion to open a serious artisanal-cheese store in Minneapolis; his Premier Cheese Market just celebrated its one-year anniversary this month. Liss's cheese and whisky pairings are pretty clever, too (a particular favorite of his: Tobermoy 10-year Scotch with Isle of Mull cheddar. The two taste so delicious together because the cows munch on spent barley from the Tobermoy distillery). But his salt bar is genius.

I love the idea of flavored salts, and would love to use more of them, but, unlike my salt-collecting colleague Nick Fauchald, I don't have the shelf space or the budget to commit to entire jars of it. My international-honey collection is too big as it is. The bulk salt bar is perfect: airtight jars of artisanal varieties, available for tasting and for sale by the pound. At Liss's shop you can load up on any of 10 types, from sulfury Indian Kala Namak black salt and clay-tinted Alaea Hawaiian sea salt to Bolivian rose salt rocks and Salish alder-wood-smoked salt from the Pacific Northwest. He also sells salt bowls, salt trays and salt grinders.

For more on Ken's cheese offerings, see our fantastic story by Laura Werlin on what's happening in American cheese in our upcoming November issue. But now, can someone please start a salt bar here in New York?

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